



NON-FEDERALLY REGULATED DRINKING WATER SYSTEMS

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

- About half of the residents of some states drink water from small drinking water systems not regulated by the *Safe Drinking Water Act* (SDWA). Forty-two million of these people obtain their drinking water from private wells.
- The quality of these non-federally regulated drinking water supplies is largely unknown, but recent well surveys, periodic outbreaks of waterborne diseases, and anecdotal evidence suggest that major public health problems exist with these water systems.
- State, tribal, and local environmental health programs do not have the resources or personnel to effectively deal with these small, non-federally regulated drinking water systems.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

CDC convened two workshops where state and local representatives from 16 states discussed concerns regarding small drinking water systems not regulated under SDWA. Participants in the workshops identified three broad areas of concern regarding the public health impact of small drinking water systems:

- State and local resources are inadequate to address small systems issues.
- Members of the public served by these small systems are often complacent about or unaware of the quality of their drinking water.
- States need technical assistance and guidance in developing and maintaining these types of small systems.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

CDC will work to help workshop participants implement the following:

- Provide technical assistance to state, tribal, and local environmental health agencies through regional CDC offices staffed with laboratory, epidemiology, and environmental health personnel.
- Increase public awareness of the importance of safe drinking water through public information campaigns and translate into consumer-friendly language technical information about potential adverse human health effects from drinking water contaminants.
- Consider expanding non-regulatory provisions within SDWA to include small drinking water systems.